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# The Hermit

..OF..



MINNEHAHA FALLS





Class 5237

Book 436









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LIFE AND DEEDS OF  
WILLIAM HERRICK,

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..HERMIT OF..  
MINNEHAHA FALLS

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A TALE OF THE WILD WEST IN EARLY DAYS

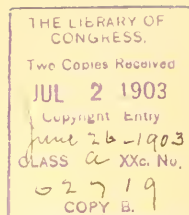
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A TRUE STORY

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EDITED BY  
SAMUEL A. HATCH



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*BY*

*SAMUEL ATHERTON HATCH*







WILLIAM HERRICK.

The Hermit of Minnehaha Falls.

## WHY I BECAME A HERMIT

I am often asked why I became a hermit. I have never answered this before for reasons best known to myself. But feeling that I owe something to the reading public I will try to answer that question truthfully.

In the first place I suppose that the love of solitude, the desire for one's own company is inherent in some men's systems, just as the desire for company is inherent in others. I always loved solitude. I loved the forest with its lonely grandeur, I loved the great prairie with its solemn stillness. But this was not my only reason for shunning human society. There was in my case what there has been in many like cases—a woman. Two words, yet how much they mean. Later in my story I shall give you a small account of my marriage and its bitter results. It is enough for me to say that the woman I married ruined my life and sent me to wander on the face of the earth. Gradually I drew away from my fellow men until during the past twenty years of my

life I have lived nearly apart from them. Still I cannot but believe that there are many good women but as for me I want none of them.

I have no trouble to unload upon any one else, let them keep their troubles away from me. I have lived with Nature and she has dealt kindly with me after her fashion, but even she cannot remove me from all touch of human kind.

Thus in my old age I must go to some retreat for old soldiers and there end my days. Two men have kindly aided me in placing this true story of my life before the public and have given me the money to go to the Milwaukee Soldiers' Home. These two men, C. C. Patten and S. A. Hatch are to have full charge of the book which shall recount the life and deeds of Wm. Herrick, Hermit of Minnehaha Falls.

So sitting here in my little vine covered shack, in the hearing of the laughing waters of Minnehaha I look back over my life and recount for your benefit the stirring scenes through which I passed.

## CHAPTER I.

### **MY BOYHOOD**

I was born in the city of New York, March 22, 1848. My parents were poor but honest and related to men who afterward became renowned. Thus I can honestly say that I am a nephew of Dr. Livingstone, the great African explorer.

Another relation with the same name now has a great cattle ranch in western Nebraska. My father was step brother to Isaac Singer of sewing machine fame.

So much for my relations.

At the age of six I came to Watoma, Wisconsin, with my parents. Here my father died when I was but seven years old, leaving my mother with the care of two boys, the oldest ten years of age.

One year later my mother married a widower with three girls. Our family now consisted of seven persons in all, and thinking they could do better for their family farther west my mother

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and step father moved to Minnesota in the spring of 1857.

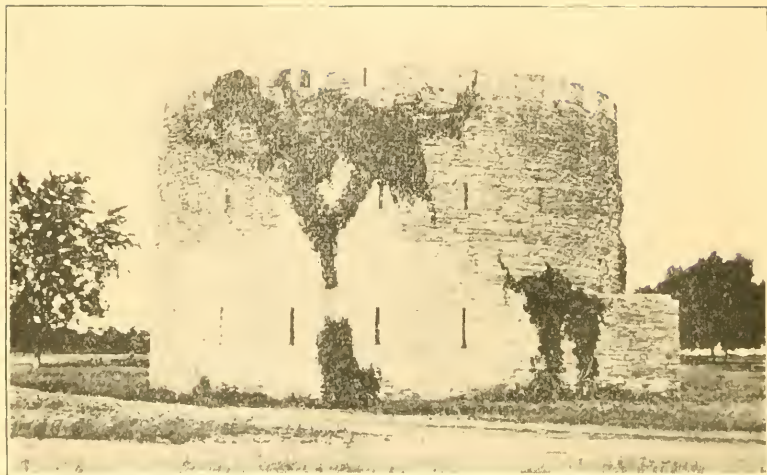
We settled on a claim on Greenwood prairie, Wabasha county, and well do I remember the dugout home and general surroundings. Our daily fare was not calculated to give us indigestion. It consisted principally of potatoes, a slice of bread twice a week, no tea, coffee, or milk, but plenty of good spring water. Meat and butter were rarities and not to be thought of.

During the second year of Minnesota life my step father bought a small herd of cattle, making me herd boy, without a mount. Being bare-foot and having a herd ground that comprised any amount of raw prairie land, my feet became very sore looking after my unruly charges. So I conceived the idea of using a pet steer for a mount and after a few lessons he took the matter very philosophically.

But I was doomed to a sudden downfall. The riding wore out my pants and my mother setting out to mend them after I had gone to bed discovered sticking to the legs a thick coating of hair. The consequence was that I received first a vigorous questioning and then a terrible whipping

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from my step father. As this was not the first beating I had received from him for trivial offences, for whenever I was at hand he used to take exercise on me two and three times a day, and seeing we could never hope to agree, I was always looking for some chance to get away from home. Many a time I was sent supperless to bed and so while he grew richer I grew poorer both in body and spirit.



**THE OLD ROUND TOWER AT FORT SNELLING.**

Built in 1820. Was the point of land attack by the Indians in their warfare against the soldiers stationed there. The piece of wall to the right shows a part of the old wall that entirely surrounded the whole fort. Another ran from the left side of the tower, thus completely shutting in the point of land between the juncture of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers. It was in these walls that many Indians were hung, among them being the terrible Chief Medicine Bottle who had taken the scalps of 37 white men.



## CHAPTER II.

### OFF TO WAR

But my turn was to come at last. The Civil War was on and I asked the privilege of enlisting. He not consenting, I threatened to run away and go south to Johnnie Reb. As he was a rank Abolitionist this had the effect of bringing him to terms, though I could see that it cut him deep.

So I left home feeling as free as the eagle that soars aloft and marched away with the boys in blue. I never saw my step father again. He died before I returned and I verily believe in doing so he saved me the crime of murder.

At first I tried to enlist in a Minnesota regiment but was rejected because they said, "I was too small to stop a bullet." Nothing daunted I went to Wisconsin, where after several trials I succeeded in joining Co. H, 48th Regiment, Wisconsin Infantry.

On my seventeenth birthday we took the cars for St. Louis. From there the regiment went into Kansas and was broken up and scattered



PONY RING.

The Shetland pony track located in the Park just above the Falls, has been the means of affording more pleasure to children than any other amusement in the Northwest. The ponies are pure Shetland, the stock having been brought from the Shetland Isles in 1891 by Mr. Hartzell, the proprietor. The herd has been largely increased since by breeding. They range in height from thirty-four to forty-four inches and are strong and gentle so that children and adults can either ride or drive them.

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over the southern part of the state. H Co. was stationed near the Blue Cut country where the famous Younger and James brothers held forth.

On our march to our camping grounds we were put on short rations, one hardtack a day for two weeks. Added to this I had the misfortune to have my allowance stolen and my bunkey, a quarter blood negro, shared his hardtack with me for the entire two weeks.

Let me say here that that negro was father, brother and friend to me, boy that I was. He shielded me from the cold night winds, he lugged my knapsack when I became fatigued from the long marches, cared for me when I was sick and protected me from rough usage at the hands of others. May he still live and may he have the fruits that are his just dues, for under his black skin beat a white heart.

In the fall the regiment assembled at Lawrence, Kansas, to take the trail over the Smokey Hill route on the Staked Plains. One who has never been on the plains in those early days cannot conceive of the great pleasure which this trip afforded me. The mighty mystery and solemn stillness of the great wastes and stretches of

unpeopled land filled my young heart to overflowing with reverence and awe. And then the animals bounding in freedom across the plain. Buffalos grazing in great majestic herds, thousands upon thousands, lumbering away with a heavy, rolling run at the approach of Uncle Sam's white covered wagons.

Many a night in those days did I awake to see sitting around in the cold moonlight a pack of wolves, making the night hideous with their howling. The antelope skipped by us with light and flying feet, the prairie dogs barked at us from millions of their towns and the rattle snakes and owls glided and flew past us and followed the prairie dog down into his hole. Occasionally we saw a mountain sheep.

One night I awoke paralyzed with horror. A rattlesnake in search of warmth lay coiled on my breast. For two hours of terrible agony I lay as one dead. Finally it crawled away only to sink its fangs in the leg of a comrade in the next tent.

At times we saw Indians, but always in too small numbers to cope with us. However the fear of them kept us from hunting the plentiful game all around us. So we ate our wormy hard-

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tack and maggoty meat with many a wry face, but without a murmur.

As we came to the different posts two companies were stationed at each, to be increased a few days later by two companies of cavalry. Companies H and A were stationed on Pawnee Creek at Fort Leonard, afterwards Sherman's headquarters, and where Bill Cody earned his spurs.

It was there I met with an adventure that came near costing me dear. Taking my gun one day I strode out of camp in search of adventure. Not knowing the danger I was in I forgot myself in the picturesque surroundings and wandered on till near sundown. Making for a small clump of trees in which to camp, I walked directly into the midst of a band of six Indians. With terrible yells they threw themselves upon me. In a twinkling I was bound to a tree and the dry fagots piled high about me. Kneeling down one struck his flint and steel and was soon blowing a piece of punk to a blaze.

Did you ever see a cat play with a mouse? That is the way those red devils played with me.



### THE HERMIT AT HOME.

This shows the hermit sitting at his cabin door among the ivy and flowers. The place was a wilderness of blooming and beautiful flowers during the summer time and many were the bouquets given to visitors who came from far and wide to visit the hermit in his home.

I can still see them in my fancy dancing around me with savage joy.

But I was not to die thus. Just as I had given up all hope, the reports of two rifle shots rang out on the air and two of my tormentors bit the dust. The other four took to their heels and getting safely on their ponies made their escape.

A white man now came bounding to my side, kicked away the fagots and cut me loose from my uncomfortable position. I sank to the ground unconscious for my nerves had been given too hard a strain. With a dash of water he brought me to and seeing that my rescuer wore the epaulettes of a colonel, I weakly brought my hand to a salute and stood at attention.

"May I ask your name, Colonel," I said. "Certainly," he replied. "My name is Christopher Carson."

I camped that night with that most unique and wonderful man. He told me to go to sleep as his horse would apprise him of any danger. Before retiring he told me some of his wonderful experiences, which same experiences came to good account to me later in the seventies, when I was in the Bad Lands of the Dakotas.



The next morning we parted, each to go his own way, never to meet again, for he died of a cancer two years later at Tafo, New Mexico. But his memory is ever fresh in my heart and will remain so till we meet on the upper trail.

I returned to the post keeping my adventure to myself. As my companion of the night before was on his way to Denver, none of my comrades were the wiser.

Our quarters were small dugouts sheltering from two to six men. A blanket served for a door. One night a skunk got through this opening and took the liberty to spice our fifteen days' rations. As we must eat them or die you may judge the predicament we were in.



Minnehaha Falls in its primeval beauty before man came to mar it with artificial adornments.

## CHAPTER III.

### HOME AGAIN

On December the tenth we started on our homeward march of four hundred miles. The snow was two feet deep and we were only half clothed. The suffering on that march was terrible and some of us were pitiful sights when we got back.

I had received no letters from home and was about to go to Mexico as a soldier of fortune, when at last our mail was delivered. I had in it a letter from my widowed mother asking me to come home. This I did in the year 1868.

We now moved on the extreme frontier of Minnesota in what is at present Lyon county. There were only eleven families west of Redwood at that time. I worked on the homestead during summer and trapped during winter.

It was during one of my trapping expeditions in the fall that I had my first fight with an Indian. Singularly enough it occurred in the middle of a lake. I came upon him in a boat in

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Rush lake. We had both been setting traps. When quite close to me he fired upon me with his rifle and only missed by a hair's breadth.

I did not wait for him to reload, but with a few strokes of my paddle shortened the distance between us and brought my oar down edgewise on his head, splitting it to his eyes. He toppled over and went to the bottom, a good Indian.

It was in the spring of '70 that the grasshoppers came. I left home and went to Wisconsin, where I spent the next winter in the woods. The spring following occurred the one and only romance of my life. I met a beautiful girl and after a few months' courtship, married her. She was young, too young for the hardships of a frontier life, and looking back now over my eventful life since I first met her, I realize it.

For two happy years we lived together. I earned a fairly good living by cutting and hauling wood. But grasshoppers again came and I was forced to go farther east.

My young wife could not stand poverty and one night on coming home I found the house deserted. Too proud to follow her up, I determined to cut loose from civilization.

## CHAPTER IV.

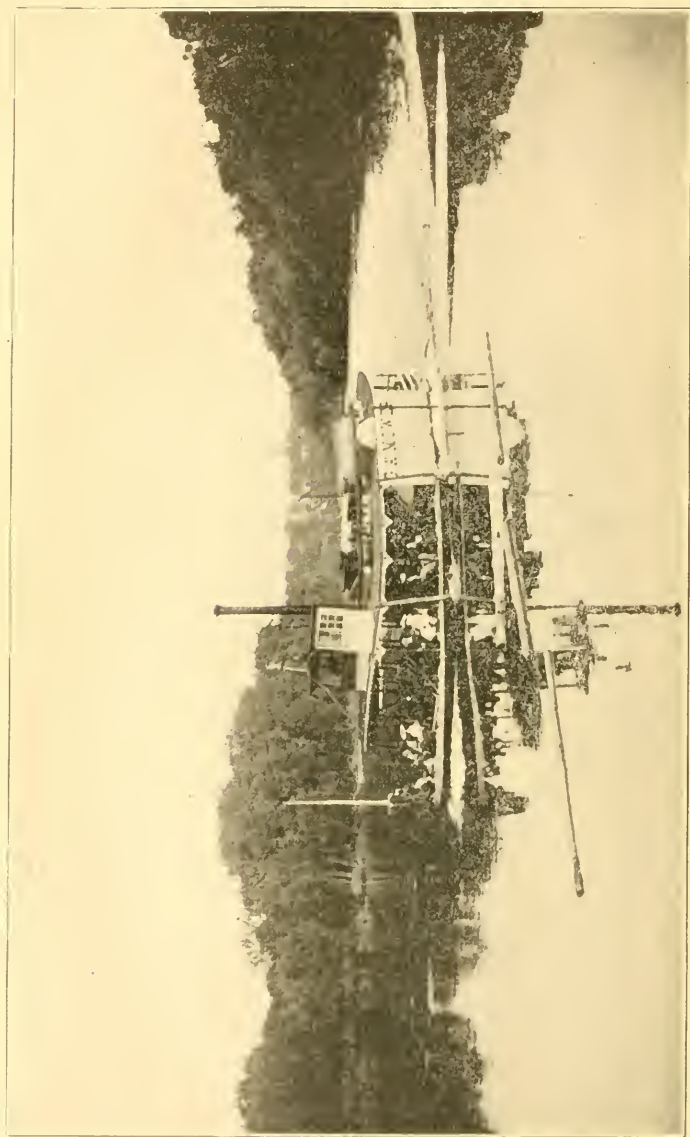
### OFF FOR THE BLACK HILLS

I joined a party of prospectors going to the Black Hills. Being turned back by the soldiers, I joined a trapping outfit, making up a trio of happy, reckless, devil-may-care fellows. We started up the Missouri, well knowing our fate if caught by the Indians. Yet hundreds of white men were every day taking their chances for the rich furs that might be taken back.

But danger and nature sharpens one's wits. If a deer bounded from a thicket or a squirrel barked excitedly, we took to cover, for that meant that some one was near. One learned to avoid sticks under the feet and to use his nose.

The smell of Kinakinic or red-willow bark is peculiarly strong. The Indians use this wood for pipes and a few whiffs of tobacco through it leaves a scent that will drive away mosquitos, flies or woodticks.

As I have said there were many white men trapping in and around the Missouri and some



The Excursion Steamer Gracie Mower will make regular trips between Fort Snelling, Minnehaha and Soldiers' Home, connecting with street cars at Fort Snelling for St. Paul, and at Minnehaha for Minneapolis.

#### TIME TABLE.

Leave St. Paul, foot of Jackson street, 9:30 daily.

Leave Fort Snelling for Minnehaha 10:30, 11:30, 12:30, 1:30, 2:30, 3:30, 4:30.

Leave Minnehaha for Fort Snelling 11:15, 12:15, 1:15, 2:15, 3:15, 4:15.

Leave Minnehaha for St. Paul 5:15; leave Fort Snelling for St. Paul 5:30.

Children not over twelve years of age, to Fort Snelling and return, five cents. Steamer to charter for evening excursions, \$10.00.

Take a trip on the Gracie Mower and see the highlands of the Upper Mississippi river.

J. C. SMITH, Manager.

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of them met some terrible fates at the hands of the red skins. The torture that an Indian can devise is past belief. I have found a skeleton tied to a stake that was driven into a red ant hill. The sequel of this hellish act was only too plain. The ants had eaten the man alive. Again we found the skeleton of a man and that of a rattlesnake tied to the same stake, the man with a rope, the snake with a buckskin. A rain would shrink the rope and stretch the buckskin. But to resume our journey.

We crossed the river and bore to the east to get by Pine Ridge and Standing Rock Agencies. We then recrossed the Muddy, making for the upper Cannon Ball.

One evening five horsemen joined our party while we were cooking our supper. Their horses looked jaded and worn, and upon our asking them to 'light and eat, they quickly got down, unsaddled and made themselves at home in western style. We were glad to welcome this addition to our ranks that night, but bitterly did we regret next morning. Scarcely had daybreak arrived when we heard the cry, "Hands up," and you can bet that hands up it was, for we were



surrounded by twenty white men on horses with Winchester rifles at aim.

"What is the meaning of this outrage," I asked.

"Shut your mouth, you damned horse thief," said their spokesman.

"Gentlemen," said I, "there is a mistake here as far as myself and two companions are concerned. These five men came to us last night and we never saw them before."

But there being some doubt as to the truth of my assertion, they decided to make us go back to the camp of two plainsmen whom our captors knew and whom one of my companions claimed to know.

This done, our identity was easily proven, tho' we had lost two days on account of the mishap.

The five horse thieves were treated in the true western style, a necktie party of five being in order. We afterwards learned that they belonged to the famous Doc Middleton gang, one of the worst set of cut-throats that ever infested the West.

Once more we started, this time for the White river. Here we met with an adventure, the likes

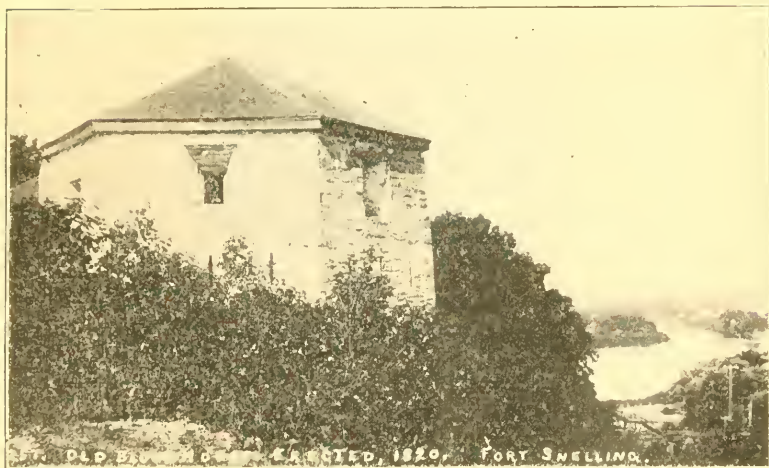
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of which can never occur again. It was a buffalo stampede. We were preparing for our day's trap-setting when a dull, rumbling noise attracted our attention. Jack Colby was the first to notice this and recognized the sound. He told us to bring our horses close up under the edge of a steep bluff of the river where a shallow cave had been hollowed out. We did so, and had not more time than we needed to arrange ourselves, when a black mass of the animals began pouring over our heads. For seven hours we were held prisoners. Then when we did at last get out a fearful and wonderful sight was revealed to us. Many of the animals had been killed and piled up in front of our cave. Over these those in the rear had passed, trampling and driving the dead ones into the ground. Over the route which they had come was a strip of ground, a quarter of a mile wide entirely bare of grass. How they had started no one will ever know. Perhaps by a hawk swooping down, perhaps by some wandering hunters. At any rate they furnished us with some good buffalo steaks, for some had rolled back against us to the terrible fright of our horses.

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es and were not badly trampled. We remained there over night.

In camping we always left one man doing picket duty while the rest of us slept. Each man served two hours and then called up another and went to bed. The next morning we started for the head waters of the White river. We were looking for beaver principally. There was large game in plenty but their hides were not as precious as at present.



The Old Block House—famous for the strong protection it afforded the garrison from attacks by the Indians on the Minnesota river. Its fire range swept both up and down the Minnesota.



Wm. Herrick at twenty-six years of age. This shows him as he was at the time he roamed in the wild and unsettled West, clad in the buckskin suit and heavy boots of the frontier trapper and hunter.

## CHAPTER V.

### **WE MAKE CAMP FOR WINTER.**

Well up towards the head waters of the White river we found what we wanted. A good, habitable cave and a spring of fine water close at hand. We set to work to render our new quarters habitable for ourselves and stock for the long winter which was at hand. We cut hay and stacked it near the cave and we got together a large quantity of dry wood. Now and then we shot a buffalo and one of us cut and dried the meat while the others tended the traps. Beaver were plenty and we had plenty to do dressing, curing and packing the skins for shipment. The winter passed pleasantly and profitably to us. The early spring found us with a large catch. But there was trouble ahead. We were not "out of the woods" with our game yet, so to speak.

One day Will Curtis, "Curt," we called him for short, came in from the traps with the information that we were discovered by Crazy Horse with fifty red skins at his back. To prove

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his assertion he showed us a bullet wound in his shoulder. We dressed the wound as best we could and made ready for an attack from the Indians.

We might be good for a six weeks' seige, then God help us. We had not long to wait. We could see them skulking up to us among the bushes, then all at once they bounded into the clearing and came for us pell-mell.

"Let them come close up, boys," I said, "then give it to 'em." I took the center, Curt the right and Jack Colby the left. When the Indians had come within twenty feet of the shack I gave the word and together our three Winchesters poured a stream of lead into them. When the smoke raiser there were nine "good" Indians in sight. Several that got away we knew to be wounded. After a while we saw an Indian approaching holding up a white feather. Upon our calling out to him he signified that they wanted their dead. We motioned him to take them but to leave all guns behind, which they did.

Six weeks passed slowly away and still they watched and waited for us. Our only diversion was to daily shove a cap out on a stick and hear

the zip of a bullet as it plowed into our heavy log cabin front.

But one day about the first of June we were brought to our feet by the never-to-be-forgotten sounds of a bugle call. A scouting expedition of the U. S. army were soon standing where Crazy Horse and his band had stood a few minutes before.

They were headed for Mandan and so glad were we to accompany them that we did not wait to gather in our traps, but merely packed up our furs and went along. Arriving at Mandan we pushed on to Bismark where we disposed of our winter's catch, clearing up \$600 apiece. We now came to the Twin Cities. Here we purchased another outfit and shipped it to Moorhead.

Once more we were ready for adventure in the Wild West.



The Headquarters Building at Fort Snelling. On this building are the bronze tablets in honor of Captain Melville C. Wilkinson of the 3rd U. S Infantry who was killed at Sugar Point, Minn., Oct. 5, 1898, in action with hostile Indians and Captain Joseph Hale, a hero of the Civil, Spanish and Indian wars. The Wilkinson tablet is erected by the members of the Grand Army of the Republic of St. Paul and Minneapolis and the Hale tablet by the Sons of the Revolution in the State of Minnesota.

Directly across from the Headquarters building is the beautiful drill ground.



## CHAPTER VI.

### WE WINTER ON KNIFE RIVER

We now took the train for Detroit where our stock awaited us and then left for Moorhead. Here we found our outfit awaiting us and we were soon ready for the trail.

Once more we are off for the Wild West,  
To battle with hardship and pain,  
For the wealth that lies in the mountains,  
Or perhaps like others be slain,  
For no one knows better than hunters  
Of dangers that fall in his way,  
From Indians lurking in ambush,  
Watching his victim to slay.

But still we will laugh at all danger,  
We will learn like the sly fox to hide  
From the foe when he follows the war path,  
That our scalp may not hang at his side.  
But when at last he is sleeping  
Upon him we creep sure and swift,  
A knife quick we plunge in his bosom,  
Then set him in the river adrift.

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As we rode out of Moorhead we heard the crack of a revolver and looking back we saw two gamblers taking each other for a target. Being extra good marksmen, they had only killed two bystanders and wounded one of themselves slightly. Such was Moorhead's early history. We now started for Knife river and its tributaries. Three days of traveling brought us to a suitable place for a camp. Here we built a log shack and surrounded it with a stockade. Inside this we sunk a well and brought in a supply of hay for our beasts. Again we procured buffalo meat and busied ourselves with our traps.

The fall and winter passed away quietly. We had three little engagements with grizzily bears.

These animals are greatly feared by the Indians and the Indian who kills one is ever after looked upon as a mighty warrior and is allowed to wear the claws of the bear in a necklace.

The trapping became better than ever towards spring and in our greed for more furs we lost all and I lost two comrades tried and true. One afternoon we saw smoke signals telling of our whereabouts and calling every Indian within a radius of fifty miles to the war dance.

As many of my readers do not know how these smoke signals of the Indians are made I will explain. They select the highest hill or mountain they can find and here upon the highest point they build their fire of green boughs so as to make a heavy black smoke. Now they let the smoke ascend until they see answering smokes from other hill tops. Then they take a blanket which has been wet for the occasion and hold it over the fire making an open space for the column of smoke to lodge in. Then with a quick movement they remove the blanket and in a second's time replace it. They are adepts at it and can make the smoke take different shapes. Rings of smoke rising one above the other means that an enemy is near. Spiral columns designate the number. Direct lines of ascending smoke call in the hunters from the game trail. Others dealt with camping grounds, etc. Burning arrows at night time were often used for signaling.

When we knew we were discovered we decided to try and slip out away from them. Our only avenue to freedom was by way of Great Falls, by crossing the Big Muddy and then swing back to the south or possibly be driven to the western

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part of Montana where we might find a mining camp.

Packing our horses we prepared for a move at dark for the north. Entering Knife river to hide the trail we rode as quiet as spectres all night long. At daybreak we halted to let our horses crop the luxuriant grass with packs and saddles still on.

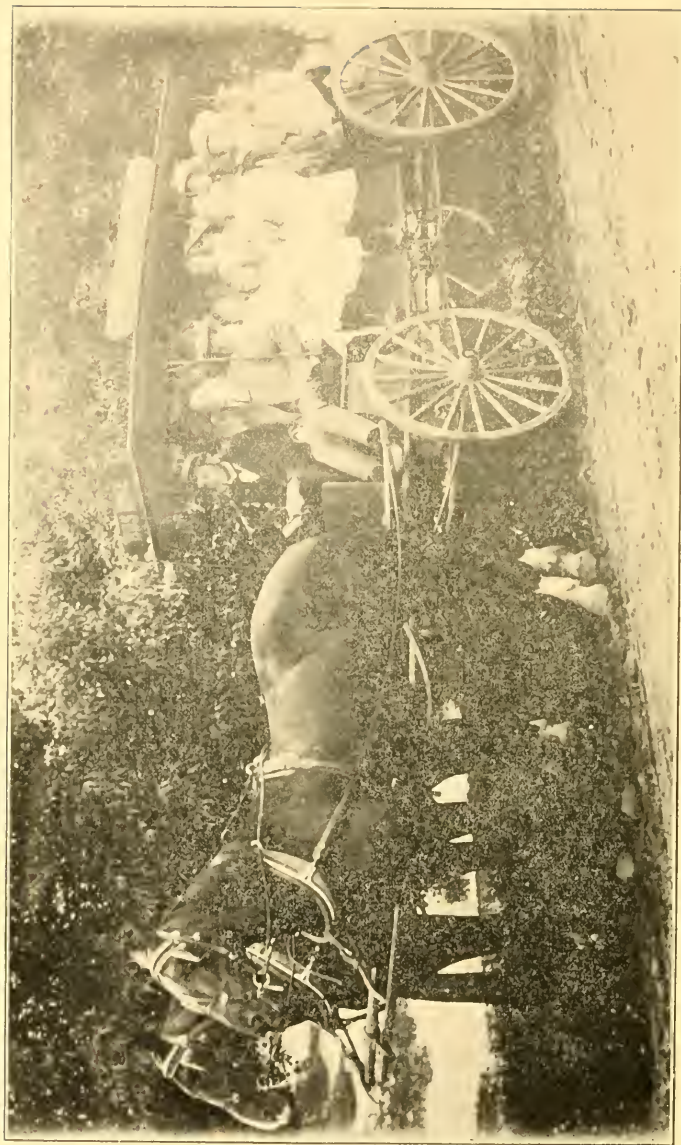
Again we started, hoping that we had escaped, but keeping our eyes open for smoke signals. Late in the day we saw what we were fearing for. Smoke signals to our left calling the red skins to be on the lookout.

Soon after dark we rode into an ambush and Curtiss was killed. Jack and I made a run for it losing our precious furs and one of our horses. In the darkness we pushed on for the Yellowstone, well knowing they would follow us at daybreak. Arriving at the Yellowstone we decided to cross and make a stand. We put our stock under cover and made ready for the enemy. By so doing we gave our horses rest and food for the onward journey if we came out alive. It was not long before they appeared on the other side of the river and going farther up crossed over

so as to take us unawares. Then they charged us yelling as only Indians can yell. We let them come to close range and then gave them our best. There must have been forty in the party though they were not all armed. We dropped six of them in the river for the fishes and the rest withdrew to the other shore. They did not try to rout us out again that day.

That night we again took the trail for the north until we were some three miles from the river. We then turned to the west for two miles, and recrossed the river. We now turned to the southwest for we could not double on our tracks again. At eleven o'clock we took a two hours' rest for our horses and then took to the saddle again. We abandoned all but two horses, the others having gone lame, and struck out. We again recrossed the Yellowstone making northwest all the next day until about five in the afternoon.

"Do you know," said Jack as we dismounted, "I feel that I shall never get out of this alive. My time has come." "Nonsense, old boy," said I, "never say die." "I feel it in my bones," he replied, "but I'll die game."



RAH FOR SNELLING.

Rah-Rah-Rah-Rec-Rec-Rec.  
Who are—who are—who are we,  
We are the Brawers, don't you see,  
Going to Snelling—chee-chee-chee.

A pretty picture showing one of the many loads of happy tourists that take the trip to Fort Snelling on one of the rigs belonging to the C. C. Patten Bus Line. Thousands of visitors to the Falls take this ride, the charge for the entire round trip of six miles being only twenty-five cents a passenger.

The busses leave Minnehaha Falls every half hour. The drive through the beautiful and historic government reservation takes one by the new fort and parade ground, past the famous old round tower and block house and near the fortifications of the old fort just above the point of juncture of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers. From here the drive passes out onto the great government steel bridge, one hundred and sixteen feet above the water of the Mississippi river, where one may get a view of river, forest and fort, unsurpassed in the United States for beauty and grandeur. From here one may also see Mendota, the famous old Indian village and oldest town in the state.

When visiting Minnehaha Falls no one should miss this beautiful drive.

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His prophetic words were too true. At six o'clock or thereabouts the Indians came up and again attacked us. We waited till they had come quite close and then our rifles spoke together. Then a strange thing happened. Two horses came tearing from the ranks of the Indians, their dead riders falling as they came. I understood it in a moment's time. They were horses captured from white men and they now ran for us. Trust a horse brought up by a white man to know the difference between a white and a red skin.

It was but a second's time to mount these fresher horses. Then we made a break for liberty. A perfect hell of shots and yells surrounded and came after us. Gradually our fresh horses drew away, but too late to save Jack. I turned to see him pitch forward in his saddle and with a "Goodbye Bill," pitch to the earth. I stopped long enough to see that he was dead and then taking his horse pushed on.

It was well that I did so for before morning my horse had stepped in a hole and broken his leg and after putting a bullet in his brain for pity's sake I took the other horse and rode away.

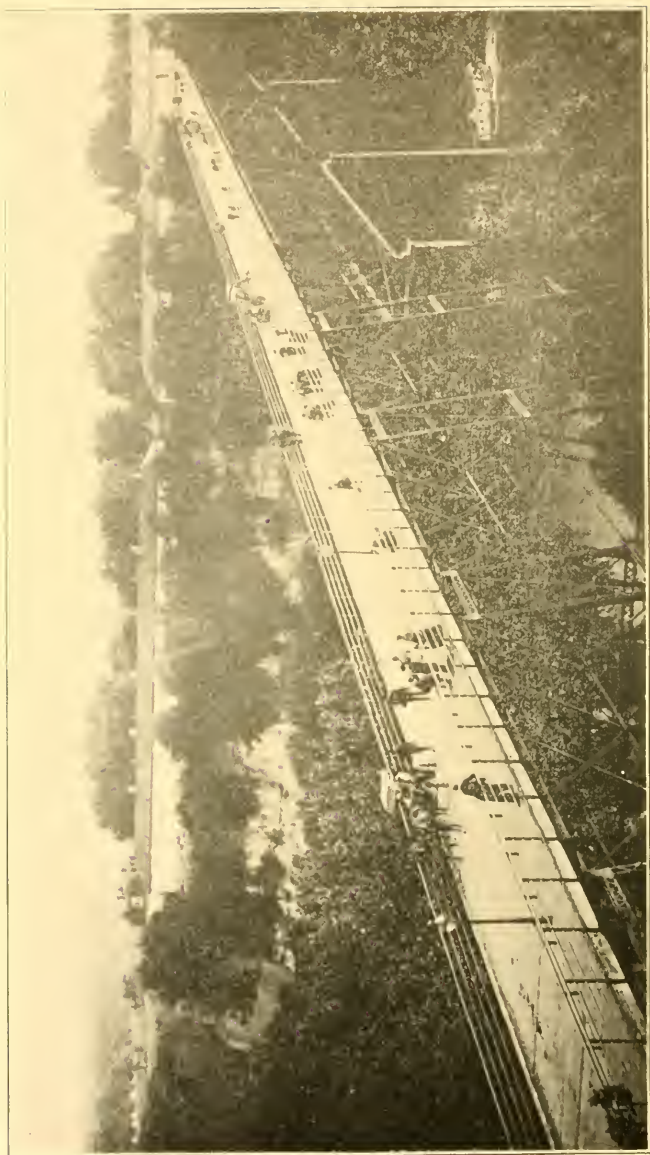


But I was not yet out of danger. I was being followed in a most leisurely fashion for the Indians thought I could not possibly escape and my capture was only a matter of time. Besides, they did not wish to come too close to the heavy brace of revolvers and the Winchester I still carried. I managed to elude them long enough to give my horse a much needed rest, however, and then took to the saddle once more hoping this time to get away.

But I made the mistake of my life in one respect, in another way perhaps I saved myself. Before I knew it I was in a trap. They were surrounding me and I knew now it was a race for life. But my speed availed nothing for they were heading me toward a deep fissure with high banks on either side.

They now commenced to taunt me with "Took-ta neah Puckchee waucon," meaning, "Where are you going, devil."

But the gully now widened out and I wondered at their confidence for I was gradually drawing away from them. But I soon saw the reason for it. The gully came to an almost abrupt end in a gorge or creek about twelve feet wide. Checking my horse in time I rode back toward the red



Government Bridge from the St. Paul side to the Minneapolis side of the Mississippi, and view of the main part of old Fort Snelling. From this bridge a view of Mendota, the oldest town in Minnesota, may be had. Mendota is an Indian village and a tribe of Indians still live there. Mendota at one time came near to being the capital of the state.

## THE HERMIT

devils back of me determined to risk all in one terrible leap for life. To their cry of "where are you going, devil," I suddenly cried, "Tahon," meaning, "over there," and wheeling my animal made for the gorge. My noble horse. He rose like a deer and to my hysterical relief landed clear and free on the other side of the awful chasm.

Bullets now whistled after me for it was their last chance of getting me, for to get over the gorge they had probably to go down or up the stream many miles.

That night a heavy rain set in and though very uncomfortable to me in the saddle was really a great blessing for it broke all signs of my trail. In the morning I crossed the Yellowstone again and had the good luck to kill a deer. Believing I was in a strange country I made a fire and was soon feasting on the fat of the land. I then covered my fire and lay close up to it to get some warmth into my chilled body.

Overcome with fatigue I fell asleep. I must have slept until about four in the afternoon for I was suddenly awakened by the strong smell of the Kinakinic. I did not open my eyes as yet. One learns to be careful.

I knew that I was surrounded and in an instant had made up my mind to play off for crazy. Indians are very superstitious, thinking that the great Father has put a mark upon one insane. Slowly opening my eyes I discovered some twenty Indians sitting about me waiting to see how surprised I would be. Slowly arising to a sitting posture and taking no notice of the Indians I began to rake the live embers of the fire out and picking them up, put them into my mouth. By chewing them very rapidly and spitting the sparks out I was able to give them quite a show. All the time I laughed loud and appeared to enjoy myself hugely. A little incident that helped in the play I was putting up was added by my horse. He walked into the circle and upon my offering him some roasted venison took it in his mouth with every evidence of enjoyment. At last their chief stood up and pointed to his forehead. I had won out. All the other Indians nodded and I knew I was safe. They believed me crazy.

But I was not yet rid of them. They boiled some of my venison and offered me a share. I ate with them all the time acting strangely. Having eaten I immediately pretended sleep. The

## THE HERMIT

next morning they were still there, but as soon as we had eaten they prepared to move. They asked me to go with them, but I pointed to the sky and then to the ground signifying that the Great Spirit wished me to remain there.

They left me strong in the conviction that I was crazy and I sometimes think I was and that I have never gotten over it yet.

I now once more resumed my saddle and for three days and nights saw not a sign of Indians. On the third night as I was traveling along about nine o'clock I heard a voice singing in a rich Irish brogue "Nora O'Neall." Never in my life have I heard sound one-half so sweet to my ears as the voice of that Irish bush-whacker.

As I came nearer I saw a canvas topped wagon in the firelight and knew it was a freighting outfit going to Bismarck. I cried, "Hello friends," and was told to "light" and "come in." I found later it was one of "Broad Waters'" outfits. I went with this party to Bismarck and from there left for Minnesota. In Minnesota I sold my horse, having discovered that he was speedy and later I learned that he made some remarkable fast time running.

## CHAPTER VII.

### UP THE BIG MUDDY

In August, 1874, I once more started for the West. With the money received from the sale of my horse I bought my outfit and another horse. In making these purchases I fell in with two men by the names of Charley Brown and Ole Oleson, the latter a true Scandinavian. Both were good brave fellows, good shots and good trappers. Brown was of English parentage as evidenced by his use of his "hs" and his favorite "bloody blooming," etc. Their horses were in pasture at Jamestown, while mine was at Moorhead, so we shipped our supplies to Bismarck.

At Jamestown, where I went first with the boys Ole got into trouble. While taking a drink in a saloon a crowd of rowdies tried to make sport with him because he was a Swede. With one blow of his fist Ole had downed his first insulter and then the crowd flashed knives and revolvers on him. It was at this juncture that Brown appeared on the scene to hear cries of



PSYCHE.



"Down with the Swede." "Blast my bloomin' bloody 'art if you do," cries Brown and steps in along side of Ole. It was thus that I found them facing the toughs a few minutes later. With the butt of my revolver I laid out two of the rowdies and fired a couple of shots around the ears of the others and suddenly we found ourselves alone with the barkeeper who was slowly emerging from behind the counter. "It's my treat fellows," said he, "name your poison."

We left town that afternoon and at the end of three days were in camp on the Big Muddy near Bismarck. Arriving at Bismarck we found we did not have enough pack horses and as I had purchased one more at Moorhead it was their turn to get another. After awhile they came back with two good looking ponies, but mean—while they had filled up on enough rot-gut to float a canoe. Both thought that they were as good men as John L. Sullivan, and there was nothing to do but let them have it out.

"Aye tank I vas better man as you Scharley," says Ole.

"Blast my bloody, blooming 'art if you are," says Brown. "Come on Sweden an' I'll knock

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the bloody nose off'n ye." So I made them give me their arms and let them set to. It was a good honest man's fight and a draw. Both were bleeding at the nose while one of Ole's eyes was closed. While I split my sides with laughter they sat grinning at one another trying to recover their breath. At last I said, "Well you are both Yankees now so shake hands to the new nationality," which they did.

The next morning we were in the saddle bright and early headed for the upper Yellowstone. As we got farther west we saw Indian signs at every hand to keep us on the alert. On Green river we had a brush with five Cheyenne braves and proved too much for them.

We learned then that Sitting Bull had been in that country at war with the Crow and Mandan tribes, so we changed our plans somewhat, and crossing the Yellowstone, made for the Little Muddy.

Up near its head waters we found good prospects and proceeded to arrange our camp and make it strong and secure. We built underground stables and shack and then got in hay for our stock and provisions for ourselves. We then commenced our trapping.

We took in beaver, otter, mink, fisher and martin seemingly without end. Along in December the snow became so deep that we had to suspend operations until the following March. During the interval we amused ourselves playing cards, throwing knives, wrestling and sparring. Occasionally we killed a black-tail deer for food.

Ole had a fight with a grizzly to cap the climax and got pretty badly chewed up.

Along towards the first of February while out hunting for deer I came to an Indian lying beside a big grizzly's carcass with a leg and an arm broken. It had been a great fight. The bear had broken the gun and with it the Indian's arm. With his good arm and a knife he had killed the bear and in its death struggle it had struck his leg, breaking it like a pipe stem.

The poor devil was nearly dead from cold and loss of blood. I swung him over my shoulder and carried him to the shack. Placing him on a bed of furs we set the broken limbs and soon had him as comfortable as could be expected. He drank our coffee and became our guest for two months and he never answered us with more than a grunt. He was our star boarder. When he got

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so he could walk he suddenly came up missing without a word of thanks or sign of gratitude. I thought I had seen the last of him but I had not.

Meanwhile in our talks Charley had told of his home in old England, of the death of his wife at Sheffield and of the little daughter left with her grandparents. On one occasion he had said, "Boys I feel as though I shall never see the settlements again and if anything should happen to me write my little girl and if you get out with the winter's catch send her my share."

Ole seemed to have the same feeling. He gave me the address of his old father and mother in Stockholm requesting whichever of us came out alive to forward his share to them. I laughed at their fears but could not cheer them up.

I alone was to come back from that trip. The end of the season drew to a close. We cached our traps in case we should need them again, packed our horses and turned our faces toward the east and civilization.

Charley and Ole were down hearted and one not knowing them would think they were showing the white feather. But it was the result of

honest conviction for no braver men traveled the West.

We traveled nights down the Little Missouri, keeping out of sight in daytime.

One night we camped in a sink hole where we were surprised by a band of Sioux Indians. We had become somewhat careless, having seen no signs of Indians, so this time we were at their mercy.

For a while we stood them off and then resolved to make a break through their ranks for liberty. Poor Ole never got through and Charlie was badly wounded. Another bullet sent after him tumbled him from his beast, dead.

As for myself I was struck with a flying hatchet which luckily for me struck a twig turning itself over so that the heavy head came full on my temple instead of the sharp edge. I was knocked from my horse and fell as one dead. When I came to I was bound from head to foot and they were tying me to a saddle.

Shortly after we started for their camp about ten miles distant. Arriving at the village I was surprised to see our "star boarder" of the past winter, the Indian I had befriended. He greeted

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me with "Honkola," meaning, "How are you, friend?" He cut my thongs and set me free and led me to his teepee.

After I had gone in he and my captors held a very animated conversation outside. I could make out enough to know that I was safe and that he was the great chief "Black Eagle."

My property was carefully put away untouched and I spent the night comfortably in the village. The next morning Black Eagle himself escorted me to the scene of the last night's fight. There I found the bones of both Charlie and Ole picked clean by the wolves. These I buried decently and marked the grave with a few stones. I could not but reflect on the fate of these two poor fellows, who had been born and raised in different parts of the world, who had crossed the waters to meet and die in a strange land far from their loved ones. But according to the Good Book our trail shall cross in the hunting ground above.

Black Eagle and his band accompanied me for a number of days. They had many fights with the Crows and Mandans and took many scalps. At the end of three weeks we were nearing civilization. One morning I found my horses all sad-

dled and packed standing ready for me. Black Eagle told me to mount and then pointed to the south, saying: "White man, go find wagon road, go Mandan, ride like hell. You save Black Eagle. Black Eagle save you. Next time meet kill. We even now. Go."

I started my horses on a walk, disdaining to look back. I rode in the direction indicated until I came to the wagon road about thirty miles from Mandan. I reached there in the evening and went into camp. The next day I sold my furs to a traveling fur agent receiving twenty-four hundred dollars for the lot. As agreed I sent eight hundred dollars apiece to Charlie's little girl and Ole's parents and kept eight hundred myself.

I now took my stock to Jamestown where I found pasture for it and went on to St. Paul. After a trip to my boyhood's home where I saw my mother for the last time I started on another trip for Montana.



#### THE NEW PAVILION AT MINNEHAHA.

Just completed at a cost of \$7,500. Located directly in front of the falls on the point of land overlooking the beautiful Minnehaha glen. The pavilion is occupied by Jacob Barnett who carries a full line of refreshments at popular prices.

Everything is clean and neat and a well trained corps of assistants wait upon the customers.

The pavilion is proving very popular under the able management of Mr. Barnett and is already the center of attraction for all hungry and thirsty pleasure seekers.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### A TRIP TO THE BIG HORN COUNTRY

I now went to Fargo and while there became acquainted with a middle aged, quiet sort of man who modestly represented himself as a frontier trapper. We soon struck up a partnership and I proposed a trip up the Little Missouri where my traps were cached. But he thought the danger from the Indians was too great and proposed the Big Horn country. So it was agreed that we were to go to the Big Horn country for the winter. My new partner, Thomas Greason by name, said he could be ready in three days' time. Buying our outfit we shipped it on to Bismarck and once more I left for Jamestown to get my steek.

I found one of my most valuable horses dead, having been struck by lightning. It was a big loss to me, for aside from his actual cash value, I feared nothing in the saddle with him. I still had eight to spare and I threw the saddle on one after another trying to decide which I should use for a saddle horse. I finally decided on two and

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set out. But when I finally met Tom I was in need of a pillow to sit on for my new mounts were western horses from the range and my saddle had met me about half way at every jump for the last twenty-four hours.

The journey to Bismarck was very painful to me and when we got there I had to take a couple of days off to rest up and get some of the soreness out of me.

On the third day we started on what was to be one of the most eventful trapping expeditions I ever made. Again I was ordained to come back alone. We moved through the Bad Lands slowly. This land, 55 miles wide and 125 miles long looks more as one would expect the infernal regions to look than anything else I can think of. Chasms run into canyons, hills into mountains and the whole thing is serrated and gorged with jagged rocks. Soft coal is found in some places, but of a very soft quality. The climate seems to have a petrifying influence upon things, as we found at different times snakes and other smaller animals perfectly petrified.

By the way, this country can produce more

rattlesnakes to the square inch than any other known land.

After crossing this belt of country we pushed on, traveling nights and hiding daytimes. Striking the Little Big Horn we were not long in locating our winter residence. We found a cave under an overhanging bank, that with a little digging exactly fitted our needs. We now walled up the front with a solid stone wall and fixed a large stone so that we could use it for a door by rolling it back and forth and fastened it with a key stone. We cut a quantity of hay from the big supply below us in the valley and brought that into our camp. Next we brought in wood and set about curing meat for the winter's use. In a few weeks we were well fixed for a siege. A spring bubbled up at one end of the cave and ran out under our stone wall to the river below. We could stand a siege of six months if we had to.

Our traps ran up and down the Little Big Horn for a distance of ten miles. Later in the year we set them on some of the smaller streams running into that river. Fur was very plentiful and we



MINNESOTA SOLDIERS' HOME.

No one visiting the Falls should fail to visit the Soldiers' Home.

A foot bridge over the beautiful Minnehaha glen leads from the park to the Home. The site of the Minnesota Soldiers' Home comprises fifty-one acres of wooded land beginning at the juncture of the Minnehaha creek and running one mile north. It lies one hundred feet above the level of the water's edge.

For beauty and convenience of situation, picturesqueness of view and perfect adaptability to the purpose it cannot be excelled; and it has withal a historic and romantic interest which will ever prove of increasing interest to visitors.

Within the city limits of Minneapolis, divided only by the river from St. Paul, only three miles from Fort Snelling, around which so many military memories cluster, and in summer literally cooled by the spray of the laughing cascade immortalized in Longfellow's classic, the ideal of a soldier's heaven would seem to have been found.

The buildings are about fifteen in number built of red brick. They comprise five cottages, a new dining hall, hospital, administration building, pavilion, two steam plants and other outbuildings such as barns, etc. One feature of the Home is its beautiful lawns dotted with flowers. The inmates of the Home care for these, cutting the grass and trimming the flowers.

The pavilion is used for entertainments which are given the old soldiers under the auspices of the Woman's Relief Corps.

The dining hall is under the charge of soldiers detailed for the work. Each man works one week, waiting on table, washing dishes, etc. The hospital employs five lady and six male nurses, all outsiders. The laundry has five outside people and three members of the Home assist these in the work.

The officers in charge are Commandant James Compton, Adjutant McKusic, Quartermaster Straub, Surgeon Bissel and Chaplain Smith. Visitors to the grounds are made to feel at home at once as every old soldier on the place has constituted himself a committee of one to show strangers the points of interest and no one ever leaves the grounds without a thrill of gratitude for the courteous and kind treatment shown by the old boys of '01.

## THE HERMIT

worked hard taking out the little animals and curing their skins.

For the benefit of the small boy who would go trapping—let me tell some of the hardships we underwent. We rose long before daylight and while one got the breakfast the other did the chores around the stock. Then each man took his gun, revolvers, knife and hatchet, seventy-five rounds of ammunition and struck out across the country to the farthest traps, sometimes being five or six miles on the way when the sun rose. He began his day's work of taking the catch from the trap, skinning it and resetting the trap. Thus he worked along toward camp. Sometimes he was compelled to go into water to his hips to free his traps.

We usually arrived in camp long after dark and our work was even then by no means finished. After getting supper and caring for the stock we must stretch the skins, remove all the fat from them and hang them up to dry, those that were dry we must pack in bales for shipping.

Day after day we followed this routine, sleeping at night in wet clothes perhaps, and eating the coarsest though most nourishing food. So

you see a trapper cannot be a lazy man. Do not believe all the romantic things you hear boys about the life of the trapper. He did not lie around in his mountain retreat before a blazing fire of logs and tell stories. On the contrary he worked long and hard for every cent he made. Besides this his life was in danger at all times from animals or prowling red skin.

Often our packs coming in at night would weigh nearer to one hundred pounds than fifty. We always saved all the tails of the beaver as every trapper thinks them a great delicacy being more tender and appetizing than frogs' legs even.

As winter came on our traps were taken from the frozen streams and set on land and when the heavy snows came they had to be taken into camp altogether. It was then that we got a much needed rest. We had only to eat and sleep now and occasionally sally forth for fresh meat. This consisted principally of elk or black tailed deer.

In the spring we commenced our trapping again and worked day and night to fill our packs. We had seen no signs of red skins and often felt like leaving our guns in camp. The last day in April we started as usual for our traps with the

intention of pulling them in as the season was about over. Little did we dream that we should never again see each other on this earth. Arriving at my traps I made a discovery that sent me scurrying to cover. Indians had discovered my traps and I knew that they were waiting to ambush me. I fell back about two miles and was hurrying noiselessly through the woods with every sense on the alert when suddenly my progress was arrested by a soft crooning voice of a woman. I soon discovered the singer. It was an Indian girl about twelve years old. I stood stock still admiring the forest beauty of the little maiden, when suddenly my ear took in another sound. I lifted my eyes to the nearest large tree above the girl and was horrified to see outstretched upon a limb one of the largest mountain lions I have ever seen. It was crouched and ready to spring upon the unconscious girl.

I raised my gun instinctively, but reflected instantly that to shoot would bring upon me the whole tribe, but I could not see the girl perish in such a way and so I fired.

That shot probably saved my life from the Indians afterward. I caught the lion or its fatal



spring, but too late to save the Indian girl entirely from harm. The heavy body hurling forward knocked her down and broke her leg besides lacerating her flesh badly.

The child had on a dress of cheap and gaudy cloth probably obtained from a trader. This I tore in strips and bound up the little one's wounds. Then when she had sufficiently revived I asked her the way to her village. Evidently she understood what I meant for she pointed out the direction and picking her up I carried her along. In a few minutes we arrived at the village. No one offered to stop me and I carried her past crowds of wondering braves and astonished squaws. She finally pointed out a teepee before which stood an Indian of very stately appearance. I looked up at him and he pointed into the tent. In I went and deposited my burden on some fur robes.

He entered after me and to my surprise said in very good English, "Wil litle white man tell me how he comes to be carrying the child of Sitting Bull in this manner?" I explained, telling him all. He again said, "White man is brave. Not many white men would do what he had done."

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He then asked me where my comrades were and I told him of Tom. He shook his head and I knew what he was thinking about. The Indians had found my friend.

Sitting Bull, for it was the great Indian chieftain himself, would not let me go until the next morning. So I set the broken limb of the little girl and put on cloths wet in cold water to keep down the inflammation. At intervals during the day I changed these. Meanwhile runners had been sent out to call in all wandering bands of Indians.

In the morning I was asked to leave. Sitting Bull gave me a fine belt and told me to leave the country as soon as I could get out for he could not answer for my safety from other bands of Indians who were even now making for that point. I bade the child goodbye, little thinking that she would remember and return life for life at some future day.

Neither did I think that in a few short weeks the country was to ring with the death of the brave Custer together with all his brave men at the hands of this same band of savages.

I went directly to the cave and not finding Tom there struck out upon his trail. I found him as I had expected, dead at the first trap. He had been shot in the back and little was left beside his bones. Sadly I hollowed out a shallow grave and laid him to rest. Back to camp I went again, alone now and far from civilization, not knowing what sort of fate I might meet.

Night found me in the saddle with my pack horses loaded and provisioned. All night I pushed on at a stiff trot. In the morning I stopped in a thick forest. Back a little way I found an open glade where I turned my horses to graze after watering them. As for myself I dared not sleep or build a fire.

As night came on I searched out a sheltered place, built a fire and broiled some buffalo meat and made a cup of coffee. I then stamped out the fire and ate my supper.

Once more I took the north star for my guide and pushed rapidly on. In this way I traveled for five days and nights. I knew that I was somewhere near civilization, but how near I did not know. I was going insane for lack of sleep and on the sixth night I lost all sense of reason. When

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I came to I was in a friendly Indian's camp. Only himself and squaw lived there on the outskirts of civilization. I had been raving for two weeks with brain fever. He had found my horses lying down and exhausted. I stayed with him two weeks longer, slowly recovering. This Indian was one of God's noblemen and his name was well known as a friend of the white man. He was afterwards given the land where his cabin stood by the government.

When I became well enough to go I said, "Well, Hauka, I must go to Bismarck. Come and go with me and when I sell my furs I will give you and your squaw a present. He answered, "Me go."

At the end of my journey I sold my furs getting three thousand dollars in cash. I gave Hauka two hundred dollars and after making arrangements for pasturing my stock I took the train for Fargo, where I hunted up Tom's widow. I divided equally with her after telling her the sad news of her brave husband's death.

I next took the train for the Twin Cities and was thunderstruck to read in a few days of the Custer massacre.

## CHAPTER IX.

### IN THE POWDER HORN COUNTRY

After spending the summer visiting in the state I once more got the fever to go trapping again. I once more found myself in Bismarek looking for a partner. But I found that the trappers looked on me with superstition. Every one of my former comrades had found a grave in the west, and I alone had returned.

Trappers are probably more superstitious than others. I am to a certain degree myself. I can refer my readers to a certain chair that sits at the corner of one of the dining tables in the Minnesota Soldiers' Home.

Inside of two years while I was an inmate of that home nine different men were given that seat at table. Three died of heart failure, three died in bed and three were sent to the insane asylum. But this shows that there is at least some foundation for superstition.

After remaining in Bismarek about a week I had about given up all hopes of finding a partner

## THE HERMIT

when I chanced to run onto a half-breed Cree Indian fighting for his life with a gang of toughs and tin horn gamblers. Stepping to his side, I laid out three of the party with the butts of my revolvers. The rest fell back to the outskirts of the town to plan a revenge of some sort. I was a bad looking man in those days being above ordinary stature and hardened by my outdoor life into a splendid specimen of physical manhood, and thus I established a wholesome fear in such cowards' minds.

The plan which these rascals thought up cost them dear a few hours later. While the half breed and I were getting our supper over in my camp a perfect fusilade of bullets whistled over our heads, one coming close enough to cut the rim of my hat, another going through the half breed's shirt. In the next minute we had kicked out the fire and were behind some trees giving as good as was sent. Suddenly a band of trappers and hunters camped near us bore down on the fellows and took three of the hoodlums prisoners. They were found to be bad fellows and a lynching party was in order.



THE SOLDIERS ON DRESS PARADE.

## THE HERMIT

Well, the half breed and I formed a partnership and left town that night. He told me his name was Louis Reill and he was a fine specimen of manhood. Later he went to Canada, headed a rebellion, became the Sitting Bull of the great northwest, was captured and died on the scaffold.

We went up the Powder Horn trail to the Powder Horn river. We kept clear of Indians for they were very warlike. In the spring of '77 Crazy Horse came tearing through that part of the country and we had to get out until General Miles gave him a severe battle and beat him.

During this time Louis had a brush with Indians and killed six in an ambush fight. We got back to civilization without a dollar. In the next few years Louis and I knocked around all over the great Northwest, sometimes striking it rich and sometimes poor. We trapped, hunted and fished and bore all kinds of hardships uncomplainingly. I was among the stirring scenes that laid the foundation for the new West. I saw civilization slowly rooting out savagry and making way for a great and free people. I tramped across the richest portion of this great





MINNEHAHA PARK DEER IN WINTER

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United States many times and fully realized its great wealth long before it was developed.

I think now of the great cities that have risen up where once only the Indian and buffalo roamed and where I trapped among them both, and I am content.

My health broke down under the privations I endured in the great West and I came to the Minnesota Soldiers' Home in 1890. But the life there did not suit my tastes as I had been alone or nearly alone so much that I did not care for company. So I built the sod house known to thousands of visitors of the wonderful Minnehaha Falls and since 1891 I have lived there in solitude on the pension allowed me by Uncle Sam. I have come to be identified with the place and no visitor thinks a trip to the falls complete without seeing the vine covered cottage of "The Hermit of Minnehaha Falls."



THE MONARCH OF THE MINNEHAHA GLEN.











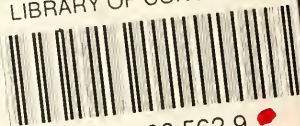








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